

any connection between the two. Participation in CBI is not conditioned on a country's decision to approve or reject a free trade agreement with the United States."

As someone who has supported trade preference for Latin American countries like I have, the most recent the Andean countries, I can confirm that there will be absolutely no retaliation against the country or voters no matter what the outcome of the referendum. The people must look beyond the scare tactics being waged in this campaign.

How will CAFTA affect Costa Rica? Voters, all they have to do is look to Mexico to see what CAFTA has done to them. Since the passage of NAFTA, poverty in Mexico has increased. The middle class has declined. Many Mexicans are fleeing to America in hopes of finding a better wage and a life for their families.

Who benefits under NAFTA and CAFTA agreements? The multinational corporations, not the people. We have seen that corporations and their friends in the government will employ dirty tricks, election fraud, and tell outright lies to ensure that they continue to be able to exploit workers and ruin the environment.

This is a historic and important vote for the people of Costa Rica. I believe it is time for the United States and Costa Rica to go back to the drawing board and develop a new trade agreement that all sides can be proud of. The United States renegotiated Peru, Colombia, Panama and South Korea. We should do the same thing with the agreement with Costa Rica. It is time to develop an agreement that benefits our workers and communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CASTLE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 928, IMPROVING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-358) on the resolution (H. Res. 701) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 928) to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 to enhance the independence of the Inspectors General, to create a Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2740, MEJA EXPANSION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-359) on the resolution (H. Res. 702) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2740) to require accountability for contractors and contract personnel under Federal contracts, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3648, MORTGAGE FORGIVENESS DEBT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-360) on the resolution (H. Res. 703) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3648) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude discharges of indebtedness on principal residences from gross income, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3246, REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-361) on the resolution (H. Res. 704) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3246) to amend title 40, United States Code, to provide a comprehensive regional approach to economic and infrastructure development in the most severely economically distressed regions in the Nation, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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DRUMBEATS OF WAR ARE COMING AGAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, out of a sense of duty and a growing fear, I rise to say that I hear the drumbeats of war coming again from this administration. This time, Iran is in the cross-hairs.

It's ironic that the alarm has sounded today, the birth date of Mahatma Gandhi, and the United Nation's first World Nonviolence Day in honor of Gandhi's commitment to peace.

Perhaps the contrast between the man of peace and an administration of war will underscore the need and the urgency for Congress to act before the President orders a military strike.

I listened and sounded the alarm in 2002 regarding Iraq. But the President and the Vice President had already set in motion their invasion plan, and those who got in the way were called unpatriotic and uncaring or worse. Back then, too many in the media, the Congress and across the Nation were willing to accept a war without justification or justice. Now, at least the American people overwhelmingly recognize the tragic consequences of the Iraq war and the occupation.

At least one development in 2008 may make this time different than 2002. The Internet has grown exponentially. Today, credible and factual information is readily available. The blogosphere is on fire sounding alarm, and we will have no one to blame except ourselves if we let this administration take us to war in Iran. Go to your computer and Google "Iran war." The search yields 74 million hits. Let me read a few of the top search results:

Day One: "The War with Iran."

"Iran: The next war," in the Rolling Stone.

"America's hidden war with Iran," Newsweek.

"Is U.S.-Iran war inevitable?" Time magazine.

"The Iran plans," the New Yorker.

And "The U.S. trains gulf Air Forces for war against Iran."

Some see the same signs as I do, and they are writing across a broad spectrum of the media, trying to be heard above the beats of war. However, the President and Vice President are using friendly fire from the right-wing media to lull the Americans to sleep, while they lay the groundwork and shop for a Gulf of Tonkin-like provocation to launch a military strike.

Journalist Tim Shipman of the Telegraph in London writes "American diplomats have been ordered to compile a dossier detailing Iran's violations of international law. Some U.S. diplomats believe the exercise will boost calls for military action by neoconservatives inside and outside the administration."

In the New Yorker, renowned journalist Seymour Hirsch says, "The revised bombing plan for a possible attack, with its tightened focus on counterterrorism, is gathering support among generals and admirals in the Pentagon."

Hirsch adds, "A Pentagon consultant on counterterrorism told me that, if the bombing campaign took place, it would be accompanied by a series of what are called short, sharp incursions by American special forces into suspected Iranian training camps. Cheney is devoted to this, no question."

Now, does that sound like a diplomatic solution to you?

For at least a year we've been lulled into believing that the administration cannot fool the American people again. But I say this is just the kind of wishful thinking this administration is hoping for. It gives them time to spin the rhetoric and plot the missile tracks into Iran.

We stand on the brink of a conflagration in the Middle East, spreading from Iraq to Iran, to Pakistan and Afghanistan and the entire region. The legacy of this administration could be wars without ends and wars without borders.

Waiting for the next election may be too late; 475 days is a long time.

As a medical doctor, I was trained to listen to the patient. I've been listening to this President, and he's telling us that Iran is his next military target. Congress is all that stands in the way of this President carrying out a bombing strike of how many sources, how many sites we don't know. And I urge the House to act before it is too late.

We need a resolution that requires the President to come back to the Congress before any act of war is taken against Iran.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHAYS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the military announced yesterday that the number of monthly U.S. combat deaths fell to the lowest point in a year. Military and administration officials tout-ed this as a success.

Is this the way we're measuring success in Iraq these days? Sixty-four brave members of our military forces were killed in September. And that is a success? That is something to brag about?

Tell that to the 64 families who will have to celebrate the holidays without their loved ones this year. Tell that to the children who lost a parent. Tell that to the mother who prayed every single day for the safe return of her child.

That is not a success, Mr. Speaker. That is a tragic loss of life. We have lost over 3,800 brave men and women in uniform in the occupation of Iraq. At least 28,000 have been wounded. How many is too many before the administration sees the errors of its ways? I can't begin to guess.

And what about the Iraqi families? Press reports indicate that nearly 1,000 Iraqis were killed during the month of September. Tens of thousands were displaced from their homes in September.

Is this another success of the administration? Tell that to the children who can't go to school, to the hospitals trying to treat patients without a consistent supply of electricity, to the families who just want to live a normal life.

The international community, the so-called coalition of the willing, sees

the writing on the wall. In fact, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown just announced that 1,000 British troops will leave by the end of the year.

And speaking of milestones, Mr. Speaker, the number of coalition partner deaths recently reached 4,000. Enough is enough.

This Congress must, we must take bold steps to bring our troops home and to help the Iraqi people return to their lives. Only when the United States military presence, troops and contractors leave Iraq will the real healing and national rebuilding begin.

We don't need any more reports. What we need is action. We need the Commander in Chief to support the troops. We need him to bring our troops home, not in a year, not in 10, now. And we have seen that this administration will not redeploy the troops unless Congress forces its hand.

Eighty-four Members of the House have sent a letter to the President saying that we will only support spending bills that fully fund the safe, orderly and responsible redeployment of our troops and our military contractors. No more, no less.

Join us in our resolve. Support our troops. Bring them home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NAFTA EXPANSION TO PERU

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the proposed Bush NAFTA expansion to Peru provides no path to job growth in the United States or to correcting the growing U.S. trade deficit with Peru. The Bush proposal will yield the same result: more outsourced U.S. jobs, growing trade deficits, more landless Peruvian farmers, rising coca production, more illegal immigration, continued decline in the quality of life on both continents, and enrichment for a narrow band of political and multinational elites.

The proposed Peru agreement keeps intact some of the most offensive NAFTA-CAFTA provisions, such as prohibiting Congress from passing legislation to promote "buy American" or to prevent the offshoring of more of our jobs. We keep asking ourselves: If you keep getting the same bad result, why keep enacting more of the same kinds of laws?

The agreement even amplifies the CAFTA provisions regarding foreign investors being able to procure government contracts and settle disputes outside of U.S. courts. I find it unacceptable that the agreement handcuffs this Congress as it attempts to protect the

interests of the people who send us to represent them. That's supposed to be our job.

On a number of fronts, the Peru Free Trade Agreement stands to cause more harm than good. Take worker rights. The agreement merely commits Peru to hortatory, nonbinding language in the preamble to the ILO convention, and it does nothing to assure enforcement through the actual body of the conventions that provide the real protection for workers. There are no worker protections in this draft.

In addition, the environmental provisions are equally inferior. All of the major environmental groups oppose the agreement, but for a couple who receive heavy corporate contributions. Would this have anything to do with the fact that the Andalusian pipeline that will bring more oil and gas out of Latin America might have something to do with this agreement?

Importantly, in agriculture, as Oxfam points out, "the agreement will harm many thousands of Peru's farmers," just as in Mexico millions of farmers have been harmed who then flock to the United States to find any kind of sustenance. Though some American farmers think they will stand to benefit from the zeroed-out tariffs, many don't understand that the MERCOSUR customs agreement between Peru and its neighbors will allow pork to flow in there from Argentinean and Brazilian imports. So I would think that our pork producers should be very skeptical that they're going to claim the largest share of that market.

Now, where are these displaced Peruvian farmers supposed to turn? Perhaps, in their desperation for a profitable crop, they will help Peru reclaim its title as the world's number one coca producer. Or perhaps they will follow the same path as Mexico's abandoned corn and bean farmers and migrate to the overcrowded cities of the United States, legally or not.

President Bush's Peru deal continues the bad trade policies that leave our consumers vulnerable to food safety catastrophes. Peru places second to China in its fisheries, and plenty of Peruvian seafood imports to our country are rejected due to filth, salmonella and equally disturbing criteria. Indeed, 27 percent, a third of all Peruvian antibiotic lines imported to this country already are found to be tainted and rejected. Why would we want more?

Until now, Democrats have stood united against President Bush's plan to privatize Social Security in the United States; yet the proposed Peruvian agreement effectively endorses and solidifies Peru's privileged and privatized and severely flawed system. Giant multinational banks such as Citibank that invest in these private investor accounts would, under the Peru agreement, be entitled to compensation if privatization were reversed.

Despite all of these concerns, instead of holding a formal hearing on such far-reaching legislation for a country